

## The Working Class in Ukraine: Chronicle of Losses

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## **The Working Class in Ukraine: Chronicle of Losses<sup>1</sup>**

### *Abstract*

*The article encloses various approaches to the definition of “working class” term. The dynamics of working class number in Ukraine over the last two decades was analyzed on the basis of sociological monitoring and social statistics data. The directions of labor mobility of workers for the same time period were analyzed as well.*

Before the 1990s, the working class was the main subject the soviet sociologists were interested in. On the one hand, it was due to the ideology; on the other hand, working class was the most numerous social and professional group and social force<sup>2</sup>, on behalf of which the party said and the government ruled. However now, only 15 years later, this term has practically vanished off the mass media's, politicians and sociologists' topics.

For a such short period working class has reduced in a number of aspects: *numerously* — working class lost over half involved in leading branches of economy as given below; *organizationally* — all those years it was silent, it did not try to use support of a party or social movement, which could represent its interests in society and making it “visible”; *ideologically* — after the perestroika, sociologists and ideologists legitimizing the new social order spared the workers their status of leading class in the

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Translated and edited by the author from the Ukrainian text “Robochyi klas v Ukraini: khronika vtrat”, Sotsiologhiia: teoriia, metody, marketynh, 2005, № 4, pp. 5–25.

<sup>2</sup>

In 1984, the working class made up 61.6% of the USSR class structure, including non-working members of families [1, p. 5].

present (in the new social and class system political and big owners classes are considered as leading [2, pp. 39–40]) and in the past too<sup>1</sup>.

During the period of changes working class aspects lose their attractiveness among sociologists; new topics and approaches released from the censorship became attractive. National researchers of social structure have mostly analyzed new groups of society — entrepreneurs, self-employed, political elite, middle class, unemployed, marginal, and poor people. Being the biggest social group of society, the working class disappeared from sociological studies<sup>2</sup>. In 1990s, there were no studies on the working class. Thus, for twelve year history of sociological monitoring performed by the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine, this subject was never touched by its researchers and this topic was not covered in scientific publications and thesis works.

By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, being free from ideological pressure, the working class lost its declared status of “social leader” and was not the main object of studies anymore. This concept became so problematic that sociologists ask about its ontological reality: “Does the working class exist in the post-soviet countries?”

In discussions on modern working class, started in 2002 in the Russian journal *Sotsiologicheskiye issledovaniia* (*Sociological Research*), V. Trushkov, B. Maksimov, and V. Belenkii say that by the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century the working class has changed — its social role and number changed materially, it has been demoralized and socially passive [7; 8]. The dialogue still mainly exists within the Marxist tradition of social classes’ definition. Some researchers think that there are no grounds to consider workers as a class — they are not solidary and are badly organized, they have no own, different from others, ideology, party representatives before authorities, so they are not the “class-for-itself”. Others say that the working class still exists in the mass consciousness (as an object of social self-identification and identification of others) and the real life (despite significant changes in its number, quality, living conditions, the post-soviet countries possess some developed industry and production concentration, as a result there should be a big group of people of the same social and economic condition). It means that the working class, at least as a

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Thinking retrospectively about the social structure of the soviet society, sociologists regard the following pairs of opposite classes: “elite (nomenclature)” and “non-elite strata” [3], “managers” and “executives” [4, pp. 259–282], “nomenclature class” and “the rest of society” [5, p. 6].

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Within the stratification surveys, which excluded the class analysis from methodological tools in 1990s, workers dissolved in the middle and low strata of society [6, p. 130].

“class-in-itself” (an exclusive economically determined category), exists, but does not represent a social force able to bring changes to the society.

In our opinion, the discussion has also to involve national specialists in social structure (oriented to ideas of sociologists being in the mainstream of the class analysis — J. Goldthorpe, E. Wright, P. Bourdieu, *etc.*), because the ideas about the working class and its nature on the brink of new century are important for Ukraine too. Such studies shall be performed in order to reply to questions related to its number and quality, inner differentiation, its role in transformation of Ukrainian society, models of consumption and leisure, social well-being, protest behavior, economic and political orientations. The author wants to enclose her thoughts about these aspects in a number of articles. The first one deals with the working class number dynamics over the last 20 years, such changes reasons reflection and tendencies traced in workers labor mobility.

## **Interpretations of the Working Class Term**

We should start our study with the term “working class”, which is not so monosemantic as it may seem in scientific publications. Discussions are still going on in the West and national sociologies. There are at least three definitions different in their volumes.

In the enlarged sense the “working class” term includes “all those who are employees and do not own or manage the means of production” [9]. This is a part of a classical dichotomy and one of two opposite and codependent classes in the capitalist society (capitalists, employers — proletariat, employees), a subject of the main social conflict of the industrial age. So, the first meaning of the working class is a totality of all *employees* — people who sell their labor for wages and who depend on owners of the means of production. However, this meaning is rarely used by western sociologists, they criticize it as an imperfect tool for division of society and badly explaining the real social opposition, because in this case the working class becomes the widest category including even managers of the biggest corporations along with ordinary workers. It is evident that workers filling such economic positions have opposite interests. Nowadays the term “property” being central in the Marxist class identification tradition has diversified and many employees become shareholders of industrial and service companies, even though they do not have control over their activity [10, p. 198; 11, pp. 119–120].

According to another narrower sense, the working class is so-called “blue collars” — “manual workers who mostly use their hands but not

minds (non-manual workers)” [9]. This category is discussed in several aspects. Firstly, should we call the “blue collars” the supervisors of manual workers, like foremen? We talk about theoretical aspects of taking into account or ignoring criteria like “authority” and “autonomy” [12]. If we concentrate on executive part of manual work, then we make the category narrow; if we add the control over others’ activity in the labor process or even the smallest extent of autonomy, then we make the category wider. Secondly, would we include workers of routine non-manual labor, like clerks, tellers? Most western researchers think that those people (despite their closeness to workers in education and culture) should rather be considered the low-middle class. The General Register of Great Britain representing the official classification of population as to their labor activity sets a border between the middle and working classes as a border between the third and fourth groups — skilled non-manual workers and skilled manual workers. Within the soviet tradition, the working class included those “working for people’s means of production and directly producing material welfare or directly and productively working for rendering services, management, and science” [13]. So, the second (mostly applied by western and soviet sociologies) meaning of the working class is *manual workers*.

In the narrowest sense working class includes manual workers in the industrial sector. This meaning — *industrial workers* — can be often seen in special publications and is fixed in the public opinion. In the soviet sociology, industrial workers were a part of the working class (the most numerous one — 38.4% of the working class of the USSR in 1984) along with those who worked for agriculture, transport, communication, construction, trade, public catering, material and technical maintenance, municipal economy [14, pp. 130–131].

So, the “working class” term can be understood differently depending on the stratification criterion chosen by a researcher. It could be the “employees” opposed to employers (through the property relations); “manual and routine non-manual workers” opposed to professionals (through employment relations — service relationship or labor contract); “manual workers” opposed to non-manual workers of any qualification level (through the nature of labor); “workers of manual execution labor” opposed even to semi-skilled supervisors (through control over labor power); “industrial workers” opposed to workers of other branches of economy. Determination of the “working class” term limits is very important for the empirical study of social structure of the society using sociological and statistical methods.

## Working Class Number Dynamics

It is evident that over the last twenty years in the post-soviet countries, the working class number reduced because of various reasons. There were two trends, global and specific inner, affected its quantitative and qualitative parameters.

According to theorists of post-industrial society, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the industrially developed countries, a part of those working manually among the economically active population had steadily reduced<sup>1</sup>. The working class was pushed off the social and economic life due to scientific, technical, and technological progress (workers, especially unskilled, were substituted by production lines, automatic production systems) and because of service expansion started in 1960s (those who worked manually changed their jobs for non-manual labor — the third sector of economy), as a result, since 1970s in the industrial sector, the professional and technical classes have become dominant [15, p. 461].

According to experts, in soviet Ukraine, the working class number reduced because of the mentioned above global tendencies, as it was in the western countries of developed economy too. Since 1990s, this process has been pushed by the inner trend of transition to the market economy and structural economic transformations followed by crises in industry, construction, agriculture, and transport.

The dynamics of the working class in numbers was studied on the basis of sociological and statistical data available for the author. According to the tradition of the class identification followed by western and national researchers, we applied two methodological approaches — subjective and objective.

The subjective approach is based on self-identification, that is people determine by their own to which social strata or class they belong. A relevant part of the working class in Ukrainian society was defined with the help of the self-classification method with four categories (“the upper class”, the “middle” one, the “working” one, and the “lower” one) and amounts to 47% of overall population of the country (Table 1). In western countries, it varies from 32% in Western Germany to 47% in the USA. These differences can be explained by specific understanding of social classes in various societies. Ascertaining material differences in subjective models of social structure between Ukrainian and western people,

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<sup>1</sup>

For example in Britain, from 1911 to 1981, the part of manual workers among all employed population reduced from 75% to 49% [11, p. 252].

we should note that they touch the middle and lowest classes rather than the working class (which is larger in Ukraine than in the said countries). Respectively, significantly less Ukrainians identify themselves with the middle class, while most of them identify themselves with the lower one.

**Table 1**

**Distribution of Answers, in Various Countries, to the Question:  
“TO WHICH CLASS IN SOCIETY WOULD YOU REFER YOURSELF?” %<sup>1</sup>**

Options	Ukraine	Western Germany	Sweden	USA
To upper	0.4	0.5	0.3	3.6
To middle	35.8	66.9	63.0	45.1
To working	47.0	32.1	35.0	46.7
To lower	16.8	0.9	1.7	4.6

The objective approach applied by sociologists to the class determination is based on features, which do not depend on an individual's opinion: mostly, the nature of labor and income. In western sociologies, J. Goldthorpe developed one of the most popular class schemes using the employment criterion. National researchers gained some experience in studies on the class composition of Ukrainian population with the help of this scheme adapted to our realities. So, we would be able to compare the working class parts in Ukrainian and western societies [16].

The complete version of the scheme includes 11 classes (empirical studies mostly use 7 classes) combined into the three main ones — service, intermediate, and working classes. Typical representatives of the working class are manual workers employed by a labor contract. They are differentiated by level of qualification and employment in industry or agriculture: the scheme registers categories of skilled, semi- and unskilled industrial workers (classes VI and VIIa), and agricultural workers (class VIIb in the British version and class VIII in the Ukrainian one).

According to Goldthorpe's class scheme, in Great Britain, the working class makes up 36.4%, while in Ukraine it is bigger — 49.6% (Table 2). Such significant differences mostly relate to the part of agricultural

<sup>1</sup>

The data of “Social Inequality III” (ISSP 1999), ZA Study 3430, and the data of the survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine (2006).

workers (in the Ukrainian version, they are presented by the separate VIII class; this modification was caused by the lower urbanization of Ukrainian society with respect to the British one). In Ukraine, the part of routine non-manual employees is less than in Great Britain, while the part of skilled manual workers is bigger, despite the fact that the data of 1998 (when the research was conducted) have already reflected reduction in our industrial employment.

**Table 2****Classes in Ukraine and Great Britain (Scheme by J. Goldthorpe), %<sup>1</sup>**

Classes			Ukraine	Great Britain
Service	I	Higher-grade professionals, administrators and officials; managers in large establishments, large proprietors	9.8	9.4
	II	Lower-grade professionals, administrators and officials; higher-grade technicians; managers in small business and industrial establishments, supervisors of non-manual employees	17.6	17.9
<b>Total</b>			<b>27.4</b>	<b>27.3</b>
Inter-mediate	III	Routine non-manual employees in administration and commerce	11.5	19.5
	IV	Small proprietors, farmers and small holders, self-employed fishermen	3.4	8.7
	V	Lower-grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers	8.2	8.1
<b>Total</b>			<b>23.1</b>	<b>36.3</b>
Working	VI	Skilled manual workers	17.6	12.5
	VII	Semi- and unskilled manual workers not in agriculture	22.1	23.4
	VIII (VIIb)	Agricultural workers	9.9	0.5
<b>Total</b>			<b>49.6</b>	<b>36.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> The data on Ukraine see [16, p. 92], the data on Great Britain see [17, p. 22].



The dynamics of the working class number can be examined using monitoring data of the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine. From 1994 to 2003, the part of skilled workers gradually reduced — from 19.3% to 13.1% (Table 3). As a result in 2003, this category was only 68% of what it fixed in 1994. It means that one third of skilled workers was involved into the labor mobility (its directions will be discussed below). The data collected from 2004 to 2005 is evidence that the negative process, at least, stopped. The number of skilled workers had increased up to 15.9% due to revival of production. However, number of unskilled workers (“odd-job worker” and “auxiliary worker” options of the questionnaire) remains unchanged in twelve years.

**Table 3****Number Dynamics of Workers (1994–2005), %**

Categories	Years											
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Skilled workers	19.3	20.2	18.3	17.5	15.2	15.6	13.8	14.6	14.7	13.1	15.6	15.9
Unskilled workers	4.8	5.3	5.6	6.7	6.1	6.0	6.3	5.9	5.0	6.2	4.3	5.7

Informational basis for sociological studies of the class structure of a society traditionally consists of the data of social statistics related to numbers and composition of the main social groups and their parts in the employed population. With the help of official statistics, we are going to describe the dynamics in numbers of Ukrainian working class in its various meanings — as industrial workers, manual workers, and employees.

Undoubtedly, western sociologists rarely use the last meaning. However, actually when capital relations are restoring in the post-soviet countries, we should examine classes through the ownership of capitals and means of production, dividing the population into the owners of property and proletariat. When in the early 1990s, under transition to the market economy, new social and political system, new stratification criteria (property and market) in Ukraine, new social classes appeared in Ukraine, economists introduced a new system of employment statuses into the statistical registration (employees, employers, self-employed, free worker in family business). Due to this fact, we can say that the proletariat represented by all employees is opposed to the class of owners-employers, the number of which was evaluated in 2003 by the State

Statistics Committee of Ukraine as 1.3% of the employed population (267 thousand)<sup>1</sup>. The part of the working class in the wide sense — as an aggregation of all *employees* — made up 87.6% (11711 thousand).

**Table 4**

**Number of Employed Population, Employees,  
and Industrial Employees (1985–2003), thousand**

Categories		1985	1990	1995	1997	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>A</b>	Employed population <sup>2</sup>	–	–	–	–	20419.8	20238.1	20400.7	20554.7
	Population employed in the economy <sup>3</sup>	25153.6	24719.9	20218.5	–	–	–	–	–
<b>B</b>	Employees <sup>4</sup>	24615	23367	18252	15953	13678	12931	12235	11711
	Workers and white-collar personnel, <sup>5</sup>	20644	19886	15326	13098	–	–	–	–
	Workers among them	14438	13589	8825	–	–	–	–	–
<b>C</b>	Industrial employees <sup>6</sup>	–	–	5485	–	4064	3811	3578	3416
	Industrial personnel <sup>7</sup>	7534	7100	5035	4275	3445	3244	–	–
	Workers among them <sup>8</sup>	6200	5805	–	–	–	–	–	–

<sup>1</sup> Economic Activity of Ukrainian Population in 2003: Statistics Collection. — K., 2004. — P. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — K., 2004. — P. 386.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 1995. — K., 1996. — P. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — P. 402.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 1995. — P. 73.

<sup>6</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — P. 403.

<sup>7</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2001. — K., 2002. — P. 386.

<sup>8</sup> National Economy of Ukraine in 1991: Annual Statistics Report. — K., 1992. — P. 291.

From 1985 to 2003, the class of employees reduced in 2.1 times — from 24615 to 11711 thousand (Table 4-B)<sup>1</sup>. The negative dynamics of this category number was not the same during different time periods — its peak was registered in the 1990s. From 1985 to 1990, the loss amounted to 5% (from 24615 to 23367 thousand), later this process was 4–5 times more intensive: from 1990 to 1995 — 22% (from 23367 to 18252 thousand), from 1995 to 2000 — 25% (from 18252 to 13678 thousand). For three year period starting from 2000 and till 2003 the number of workers decreased by 14% (from 13678 to 11711 thousand). In the beginning of the perestroika, managers of enterprises and workers considered the negative process in economy (drop in production because of lacking governmental orders, disrupted links, problems related to selling production, etc.) to be temporary and moved to the employment kinds, like part-time or additional days off, but in the middle of the 1990s they understood that changes were inevitable and stopped covering the real unemployment (we will discuss its figures below). This fact explains the crucial jump in official figures related to workers of the most popular professions who formed the unemployed group, changed occupations and looked for economically beneficial jobs, most of which were in the shadow economy. So, for 18 years (from 1985 to 2003), the officially registered labor market had lost a half of employees.

It is hard to define the part of the working class taken in its narrow sense — as *manual workers* — among all the employees. To evaluate the number of “blue collars” by basing on the statistical data is problematic, because the official statistics bodies do not register (or at least do not publish such figures in statistical reports) numbers of workers as a separate professional category. However, up to 1995, the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine registered the category “workers and white-collar personnel” (which was changed into “employees” in 2002), in which the category “workers” was mentioned separately (Table 5). It included manual workers involved in the industry, construction, transport, agriculture, trade, services, and municipal economy.

As evident from the table above, after the World War II, the number of workers (as well as workers and white-collar personnel as a whole) was steadily growing up to 1985. So, at the beginning of the perestroika, the Ukrainian working class (manual workers) reached its peak: the maxi-

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<sup>1</sup>

For the period of registration by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, this category was called: “workers and white-collar personnel” until 1997, since 2002 — “employees”. They also changed methods for determination of this category. That is why, in Table 4-B the data on its numbers are presented in a separate line (like the categories A and C).

num of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was registered — 14438 thousand. Since 1980, the dynamics of workers' employment had lost its speed. 1960–1965 — its growth was 19% (from 7971 to 9830 thousand), 1965–1970 — 16% (from 9830 to 11713 thousand), 1970–1975 — 10.5% (from 11713 to 13076 thousand), 1975–1980 — 7.7% (from 13076 to 14171 thousand), 1980–1985 — only 1.8% (from 14171 to 14438 thousand). One of explanations could be the beginning of stagnation in the soviet economy.

**Table 5**

**The Number of Workers and White-collar Personnel (1940–1997),  
thousand<sup>1</sup>**

Years	Number of workers and white-collar personnel	Workers among them	% of workers among workers and white-collar personnel	Years	Number of workers and white-collar personnel	Workers among them	% of workers among workers and white-collar personnel
1940	6578	4610	70	1975	18356	13076	71
1945	4298	–	–	1980	20042	14171	71
1950	6943	–	–	1985	20644	14438	70
1955	8688	–	–	1990	19886	13589	68
1960	10659	7971	75	1995	15326	8825	58
1965	13397	9830	73	1996	14220	–	–
1970	16200	11713	72	1997	13098	–	–

In the first half of the 1980s, the number of workers had stabilized, but the perestroika brought the negative tendencies to the employment sector. From 1985 to 1990, the working class lost 6% though there were no significant structural changes in the economy of that time, and in 1990–1995 these losses made up 35%! As a result, from 1985 to 1995, the number of workers reduced from 14438 to 8825 thousand. In other words, due to economic and political crucial changes, only for one decade the labor market became “thinner” by 39% manual employees. In 1995, their number reduced to the number of the 1960s.

<sup>1</sup>

National Economy of Ukrainian SSR in 1985: Annual Statistics Report / CSD USSR. — K., 1986. — P. 242; Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 1995. — P. 73.

Before 1985, the part of workers among the total group of workers and white-collar personnel was approximately the same — close to 72% (Table 5). From 1990, it had lowered and in 1995 it reached 58%. It could be explained by the fact that namely “blue collars” but not “white” ones suffered most of the staff reduction.

After 1995, the losses among workers were the same (or even more) as in the period of 1990–1995 (we conclude from the negative dynamics in numbers of the employees). However, as we mentioned above, it is impossible to make any evaluation, because statistical reports stopped presenting information on the category “workers”. The evaluation could be only rough. We know that, in 2003, the number of employees was evaluated as 11711 thousand; if we suppose that the part of workers among them was 58% (as it was in 1995), then, in 2003, the number of workers could be approximately 6792 thousand. So, from 1985 to 2003, the number of “blue collars” reduced in 2.1 times — from 14438 to 6792 thousand.

Let us evaluate the losses among the *industrial workers*. It could be done if we analyze the number dynamics of industrial personnel (since 2002, this category has been called by official statistics as “industrial employees”). From 1985 to 2001, the number of this group reduced in 2.3 times — from 7534 to 3244 thousand (Table 4-C). Moreover, not only the absolute number of industrial personnel reduced, but also its part in all employees. In 1985, it was 31%, and in 2001 it was 23%.

In statistical reports of 1985, 1990, and 1991, we found the numbers of industrial workers as a separate category among the industrial personnel (Table 4-C). In 1985, the number of workers was 6200 thousand, that is 82% of all industrial personnel. (You can see that the part of workers in the industry is significantly bigger than in the economy as a whole; at that time, the part of workers in the economy was 70%). The industrial workers formed 43% of all workers employed in the economy (manual employees in industry, agriculture, trade, construction, and transport). In 1990 and 1991, the correlation (82% and 43% correspondingly) was the same as in 1985; it means that, in that period, structural reforming of economy and the corresponding changes in the employment system did not reveal their strength.

Having given that in 2001 the part of industrial workers among all employees in the economy (3244 thousand) was 82%, we can calculate that their number was approximately 2660 thousand. So, for 1985–2001, the number of industrial workers had reduced from 6200 to 2660 thousand, that is in 2.3 times.

From 1985 to 2003, the working class of Ukraine (in all senses) suffered great losses. The labor market lost over half (13 million) of all employees, the number of manual workers reduced in 2.1 times (by 7.7 million) and the number of industrial workers reduced in 2.3 times (by 3.5 million)<sup>1</sup>.

**Reduction of workers number by branches of economy.** It is hard to define exact figures on losses of “blue collars” by branches of economy in the transition period, because the state statistics reports do not include the dynamics of workers as a separate category by branches. However, we can use the official data on dynamics of employees and the industrial personnel by branches, taking into account that the parts of workers employed in the economy as a whole and in the industry are 72% and 82% correspondingly.

According to Table 6<sup>2</sup>, reduction in numbers of employees can be seen in most branches of Ukrainian economy, but it was not even. The construction suffered most, it lost over two thirds of employees (it means that they lost workers too). The next are the service branch: public catering, information services, science and scientific service, material and technical maintenance. The industry, agriculture, transport, trade, municipal economy, consumer services, and arts lost 40–50% of their employees. The spending branches, such as public health, education, culture, and municipal economy lost approximately one fourth of their employees. Only four of 25 branches of economy were lucky to increase their numbers of employees (forestry, financing, crediting and insurance, social security, as well as the government and economic management bodies). Communications managed to maintain the same number of employees (with insignificant losses). So, the negative dynamics in employment was registered in four fifths of the branches of economy and most intensively in those where employees of manual labor were employed.

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<sup>1</sup> In Russia, in 2000, the part of working class was evaluated by sociologists as 40% of all economically active population (30 million of 65 million employed population); it means that from 1990 it reduced in 1.4 times (by 13 million). The number of industrial workers, for the same period, reduced twice — from 19 to 10 million [7].

<sup>2</sup> To make the comparison correct, we limited it to the data on the branch workers' number in 1990–2001 obtained by the same methods of indicators' determination. Since 2003, the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine has been registering the data according to the Classification of Types of Economic Activity adopted by UN; so, the direct comparison would not be possible.

**Table 6**

**Number of Employees by Branches of Economy (1990–2001), thousand<sup>1</sup>**

Branches	1990	1995	2001	2001, % of 1990
<b>Total</b>	<b>23367</b>	<b>18252</b>	<b>12931</b>	<b>55</b>
Industry	7100	5035	3498	49
Agriculture	4881	3801	2131	44
Forestry	62	69	105	169
Transport	1491	1126	785	53
Communications	277	257	258	93
Construction	1920	1115	577	30
Trade	1047	758	487	47
Public catering	482	224	67	14
Material and technical maintenance	152	115	49	32
State purchases	97	83	45	46
Informational services	58	13	12	21
Geology and exploration, hydrometeorology	–	33	27	–
Industrial consumer services	–	110	60	–
Housing services	333	265	170	51
Communal services	460	437	393	85
Non-industrial consumer services	108	36	43	40
Public health	1265	1254	1129	89
Physical culture and sport	58	41	35	60
Social security	38	67	78	205
Education	1829	1803	1572	86
Culture	283	258	209	74
Arts	85	55	34	40
Science and scientific service	553	276	183	33
Financing, crediting and insurance	128	168	154	120
Government and economic management bodies	287	546	628	219

<sup>1</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2001. — P. 383–384.

**Table 7**

**Number of the Industrial Personnel by Branches of Industry  
(1985–2001), thousand<sup>1</sup>**

Branches	1985	1990	1995	2001	2001, % of 1990
<b>All industry</b>	<b>7534</b>	<b>7100</b>	<b>5035</b>	<b>3244</b>	<b>46</b>
Electric power industry	125	137	193	225	164
Fuel industry	691	656	596	400	61
Ferrous metallurgy	503	447	413	434	97
Non-ferrous metallurgy	48	44	35	41	93
Chemical and oil industry	347	325	255	183	56
Engineering and metalworking industry	3215	3058	1876	974	32
Woodworking, pulp and paper industry	320	297	216	93	31
Construction materials industry	447	395	289	139	35
Glass, porcelain and ceramic industry	92	76	68	45	59
Light industry	842	756	352	199	26
Food industry	693	683	582	416	61
Microbiological industry	7	8	6	3	38
Flour-grinding and grain industry	65	67	53	31	46
Polygraph industry	42	39	30	25	64
Medical industry	43	26	28	21	81

According to Table 6, in 1990–2001, the number of employees reduced in 1.8 times (on average) in the economy and in two times in the industry. So, the industrial employees suffered more than employees of other branches of the economy. However, the negative dynamics was not the same in branches of industry (Table 7). The greater losses (in three times) were in engineering and metalworking industry, light and woodworking industry, and construction materials industry. The number of employees reduced twice in chemical and oil industry, flour-grind-

<sup>1</sup>

Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2000. — K., 2001. — P. 365–366; Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2001. — P. 386–387.



ing and grain industry, in over 1.5 times — in fuel, food, polygraph, and glass industries. The employees' number in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy did not change practically. In the electric power industry the number of employees increased in 1.6 times. It should be noted that in Ukraine, like Russia, the numbers of employees in energy and raw materials industries remained the same or even increased; science-related industries suffered more from their employees' loss.

The aforesaid analysis permits to draw a conclusion that structural changes that affected Ukrainian society in its new history have radical adverse effect. In the employment, we lost over half of employees, who worked in most branches of economy and industry. We can ask the question: where did these workers go? What did 13 million of employees, previously employed in Ukrainian economy, do? We are especially interested in 3.5 million of industrial workers, who left the official labor market. Let us talk about their shifts.

## Directions of the Workers' Labor Mobility

**Firstly**, the workers left ineffective branches for effective ones being in demand at that time. However, analysis of the branch employment dynamics revealed that in 1990–2001 in Ukraine, there were few of them and their employment capacity was not adequate. Only the electric power industry (with its increased employment in 1.6 times) was able to hire approximately 90 thousand (Table 7). It means that other industrial workers could find job only in the non-industrial economy. Analysis of branches employment data reveal that the number of employees increased in four branches: forestry, social security, financing, crediting and insurance, the government and economic management bodies (Table 6). It is obvious that three of them (apart from the forestry that added 43 thousand of workers) created jobs hardly for the “blue collars”. So, only insignificant part of the manual workers (approximately 140 thousand) could have found appropriate jobs in the traditional economy segment. It means that most workers were forced to change their professions and look for alternative employment.

**Secondly**, some workers lost their old jobs, did not find new ones and became unemployed. In 1990s, this group was new for the social structure of Ukrainian society. Different evaluations of its number depended on different calculation methods (Table 8). According to the ILO data, among the economically active population, the unemployment rate reached its peak of 11.7% in 2000 and has been decreased gradually. The Labor Ministry of Ukraine took into account the number of unem-

ployed officially registered by the State Employment Office and announced that this figure was 4.3%, that is three times lower.

**Table 8**

**Number of the Unemployed, Determined by the ILO Methodology  
and Officially Registered (1995–2003)**

Categories	1995	1997	2000	2001	2002	2003
Unemployed by the ILO methodology (thousand) <sup>1</sup> ,	1437.0	2330.1	2707.6	2516.9	2301.0	2059.5
% of economically active population	5.6	8.9	11.7	11.1	10.1	9.1
Officially registered unemployed (thousand) <sup>2</sup> ,	242.0	351.1	1174.5	1155.2	1008.1	1034.2
% of economically active population	0.5	2.3	4.3	4.2	3.7	3.8

Since 2000, statistical reports have been including the data on professions of unemployed; so, we can evaluate the part of workers in this social group. Every year, among the registered unemployed, who look for jobs, there are over two thirds (in 2004, it was even over three fourths, that is 734.4 thousand) of manual workers from services and trade, agriculture and forestry, industry (lines 5–10, Table 9). The number of skilled industrial workers makes up one third of all unemployed (288.4 thousand) (lines 7–8, Table 9), and the number of unskilled workers is over one fourth (263.8 thousand) (lines 9–10, Table 9).

The highest number of the unemployed per a vacancy, so, the most serious problems in employment were registered in 1998–2000, when 20–24 people were pretenders to a vacant job<sup>3</sup>. At that time, like at present, the industrial workers (craft and related workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers) have better opportunities for employment than skilled agricultural and forestry workers, service workers and shop sales workers. By 2004, the pressure on a vacancy had reduced in the industry, it means that the economy improves; the enterprise demand for workers grows, especially for the highly skilled. However, de-

<sup>1</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 1997. — K., 1999. — P. 365; Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — P. 388.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — P. 400.

<sup>3</sup> In 1996, the pressure on a vacancy was 1.9 people on average, while in 1997 — 11.9, in 1998 — 20 (Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 1997. — P. 372).

spite these positive tendencies, the reserve army of labor has three fourths of “blue collars” and one third of skilled industrial workers.

**Table 9**

**Dynamics of Demand and Supply of Labor Force  
by Occupational Group (2000–2004)<sup>1</sup>**

Categories	Number of registered unemployed, thousand			Enterprise demand for employees to fill vacancies, thousand			Number of the unemployed per a vacant job, person		
	2000	2002	2004	2000	2002	2004	2000	2002	2004
<b>Total</b>	<b>1204.6</b>	<b>1028.8</b>	<b>1003.7</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>96.9</b>	<b>138.8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Legislators, senior officials, and managers	58.1	53.9	51.1	2.6	4.7	8.0	22	11	6
2. Professionals	100.2	75.1	60.2	4.9	9.2	15.1	20	8	4
3. Technicians and associate professionals	163.9	124.7	105.4	4.8	9.0	13.8	34	14	8
4. Clerks	65.0	56.1	52.6	0.5	1.3	2.6	125	43	20
5. Service workers and shop and market sales workers	149.3	127.2	133.7	2.1	4.8	7.5	70	26	18
6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	24.9	34.7	48.5	0.8	1.2	1.8	30	29	27
7. Craft and related workers	235.8	164.7	120.1	18.6	37.7	48.8	13	4	2
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers	226.2	187.8	168.3	13.1	22.3	30.4	17	8	6
9. Elementary occupations	142.2	173.4	232.4	3.3	6.7	10.8	43	26	22
10. People without profession	39.0	31.2	31.4	–	–	–	–	–	–

<sup>1</sup> Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2001. — K., 2002. — P. 377; Annual Statistics Report of Ukraine, 2003. — P. 396.

**Thirdly**, having failed to get an appropriate job in the traditional economy, many workers decided not to register in centers for employment explaining this by the fact that the unemployment benefit is small and the service hardly helps to get a job. Some of them became self-employed: the practice where an individual is an employer and an employee, two in one. Widely spread in western countries for two past decades, this phenomenon of alternative employment appeared as a mass manifestation in Ukraine in the beginning of the 1990s [18]. Ukrainian self-employment is materially different from western models: here, it was conditioned by decline in the economy and crash in the industry, ineffective control by the government over the labor market, and in western countries, it was a result of growing individualization in the labor process inherent in the post-industrial economy. Our self-employment is a way to survive, to get protection from unemployment for the most unprotected groups of population; in the West, it is required by intellectuals seeing in it a way to use efficiently their intellectual potential and personal productive means in order to develop new information, industrial, and social technologies [10, pp. 196–200].

It is difficult to evaluate the number of self-employed, because their labor activity can be registered or not registered. For the period of official recording of this category by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, its part had been growing steadily: in 1999, it was 6.9% of all employed in the economy, in 2003 — 9.6%, it means that the group of self-employed increased in 1.4 times over 5 years (Table 10). According to the monitoring performed by the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine, the part of self-employed among respondents (this category was included into the questionnaire in 2002 as an option of “employment status”) varies from 5.4 to 8.6%.

**Table 10****Number of the Self-employed (1999–2005), %**

Data sources	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
State Statistics Committee <sup>1</sup>	6.9	8.1	8.5	9.2	9.6	–	–
Monitoring survey <sup>2</sup>	–	–	–	8.6	5.4	6.4	5.7

<sup>1</sup> Economic Activity of Ukrainian Population, 2003: Statistics Collection. — K., 2004. — P. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Ukrainian Society, 1994–2004. Monitoring of Social Changes. — K., 2004. — P. 650.

It is difficult to get exact numbers of former workers among the self-employed (special studies are needed). Anyway, according to the monitoring data, 16.2% of self-employed determine their current occupational status as “skilled or unskilled workers”. Moreover, 59.8% of self-employed have unfinished or complete secondary education, which leads them to the “blue collars” group. So, over half of self-employed could be manual workers, i.e. approximately one million people. As studies show, there are various kinds of self-employment among workers: trade and services of different kinds, cab business, suitcase trade, construction, repair, commercial growing of agricultural products, collecting of scrap metal, etc. [19].

**Fourthly**, one of workers leakage channels from the officially registered labor market is the temporary labor migration abroad. Taking into account the mass character of this labor practice, people consider it to be the most efficient way to solve the employment problems and survive. However, its volumes differ depending on sources: from 2 to 7 million Ukrainians work abroad (it is no less than one tenth of all economically active population)<sup>1</sup>. According to the monitoring data of the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine, by 2005, members of every eighth Ukrainian family have gained experience of working abroad (12.1%); 8.0% of respondents personally went there to work (3.5% — once, 1.7% — twice, 2.8% — more than twice). It is not only the “brain drain” but the “manpower drain” too. Workers form the biggest group of migrants (18.8% — skilled workers, 4.2% — unskilled ones). So, even evaluating the labor Ukrainian migration minimally (2 million), we get that the workers’ part, being one fourth of it, makes up 460 thousand.

Geography of Ukrainian workers’ labor migration is wide, but the most attractive countries are Russia and Poland, then Germany and Czech Republic [20, p. 159]. Most of Ukrainian labor force goes to Russia. Russian enterprises employ immigrants of manual occupations; the diploma specialists are few there. For example, supplying one third of all foreign workers, Ukraine takes the leading position in the labor market of Moscow [21, p. 33]. Ukrainians are employed in transport (among foreigners working in Moscow as trolley-bus and bus drivers, 75% are Ukrainians), construction (legally at big construction sites and illegally

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<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to evaluate, because many labor migrants try to avoid legalization in the country of temporary residence. According to the known researcher of labor migration, I. Prybytkova, over half of Ukrainians worked abroad by oral agreement with employers, without any registered labor contract [20, p. 157].

at country houses construction), mining industry (miners, oil industry workers), trade and catering. Most migrants are men (63.6%) of middle age (72.7%), living in cities (42.4%) and towns (33.3%). The leading regions supplying workers abroad are western (33.3%) and central (33.3%) Ukrainian oblasts. 87.5% of labor migrants are married, but most of them leave the country without families in order to save money and have more time for work.

Temporary trips abroad for earning are still attractive labor practice for Ukrainian workers. In 2005, among potential migrants (those who plan to be involved in the labor migration), workers made up one third (22.0% — skilled, 7.0% — unskilled). Over one third (36.4%) of the workers who have already worked abroad are going to continue this practice.

## **Conclusions**

We have to state that the “age” of working class, if there are any legal grounds to call it so, became a thing of the past. Based on sociological and statistical data analysis, we can state that over the last two decades, the number of working class and their part of employed population has reduced significantly. Since the middle of 1980s, the working class — meant as employees and manual workers — has reduced in 2.1 times, the number of industrial workers even more — in 2.3 times. In the employment, the most intensive changes were registered in the middle of 1990s, and they greatly differed in different branches. Reforms in the economy structure mostly affected those who worked in construction, industry, transport, trade and agriculture. There were essential losses in the avant-garde of Ukrainian industry — engineering and metalworking industry, aircraft construction, and shipbuilding, i.e. the branches, which significantly involve science.

Further labor activity of workers, who were fired or voluntarily left their jobs at that period, can be presented in the following ways: a little part of them found jobs in other branches (the traditional economy employed no more than 140 thousand), other unemployed were forced to change their professions or kinds of employment. The flow left the working class and divided into three branches, which were far from traditional for Ukrainian workers: temporary labor migration abroad, self-employment, and transition into the unemployment status.

Despite the statistical data presenting a significant decrease (over two times) in the number of working class in Ukraine, we cannot say that the working class disappeared. The country managed to save the indus-

try and high concentration of industrial workers, the part of which, among all employed, is close to the corresponding figures of the western social structures (according to Goldthorpe's class scheme, nearly 40% of population employed in Ukraine are industrial workers, in Britain, it is 36%). Moreover, this social category is claimed by the public consciousness: while socially self-identifying, approximately half of Ukrainians (47%) determined themselves as workers. Of course, we came in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the radically new situation as to the working class, but according to the monitoring data, the worst time has passed: in 2004–2005, the employment climate improved, the lowest figures in the economy and losses of the working class were overcome.

What are the prospects? New Ukrainian power announced one of the main goals to be a solution of the employment problem. The task is ambitious: to create 5 million new working places for the next five years (it is one fifth of all labor resources in Ukraine). We are not talking just about employment of millions and reanimation of working class. Experts think that if we want to solve the employment problem, our actions should not be limited by a social policy dealing with unemployed, we need a structural policy for creation of new jobs providing the new quality of economic growth, making the Ukrainian economy competitive, bringing it to a new position in the system of international division of labor [22]. It could be done only when the country re-orientates its economy from the raw-export vector to the knowledge-focused one based on production and industrial application of knowledge.

What are the sources of the working potential restoration? V. Shandara, Minister of Industrial Policy, says that priorities must be given to those industrial branches, which mostly involve science and in which Ukraine has the best achievements — aircraft construction, shipbuilding, engineering (by the way, every working place in engineering provides 9–10 additional places in cooperating branches) [23]. As to new jobs for the “blue collars”, the construction industry is very perspective — we are expecting a program of mortgage credits for housing construction to be adopted. Development of housing construction would essentially increase the employment, for example, in construction materials production, furniture, housing and communal services.

New employment structure of Ukraine will be principally different (oriented to create places for “intellectuals” and not simple “working hands”), it will affect social and class transformations in Ukrainian society. However, the working class will be still presented in it. Of course, it will be of new quality — new correlations between the branch, territorial,

and qualification categories; with new differences developed as new solidarities and new conflicts. It is important to observe the working class' development under liberal modernization of economy. Such monitoring studies would need the data of social statistics along with sociological surveys, finance support of research projects on the class space of Ukraine and the modern working class in particular.

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